Vol. 5, Nos. 5—6
May — June 1929

Canisiusgasse Nr. 16
Vienna IX/1, Austria

ACIES ORDINATA

THE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REVIEW ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL SECRETARIATE OF SODALITIES OF OUR LADY



Catholic Action

Our Holy Father's call to Leadership

Catholic Action is the Church working in society, championing whatever is good wherever it appears and condemning evil, whosoever may be its agent or whatever may be its source. Its unrelenting spirit is that of the Church herself, her Decalogue, her Gospel, her eternal, unchangeable and indestructible truth. Its plasticity is that of the Church, adjusting itself to every form of government . . . to every kind of political organization, to every type of social and civil life among the various peoples. Catholic Action, on which Our hope for the regeneration of the individual, the family, society and the whole world rests, is the lay apostolate supporting the apostolate of the bishops and priests. It is the participation of the laity in the special mission of the Church by coöperation in Catholic things. However, it is not any kind of coöperation wherein the individual follows his own will, but only such service as is coördinated and united with all the forces of Catholicism. Therefore Catholic Action will utilize the form of modern strategy, which sees in large armies not an uncontrollabe mass but a detailed organization of large and small bodies of troops, each burdened with a definite task, but all directed by one authority, the general staff, for the single objective of defeating the enemy. Catholic Action must accept this attitude of mind, so that in private and public life it can operate according to the viewpoint of Catholic teaching, meet the different needs of time and place, ascertain the position of the opposition, organize ways and means to combat it, enlist coöperation in the fight, give splendid example for imitation, and effect a constant progress for the Catholic movement. Pius XI. June 19, 1926.

And, lest we forget, allow me to quote here part of the address of the Holy Father to a group of Fathers and Scholistics of the Gregorian University on the Feast of the Presentation last November:

By this time all know the special friendliness and good will of the Pope for the Society of Jesus; a friendliness and good will which is founded on the many and distinguished services which the Society has rendered to the Church of Jesus Christ and to the Holy See. The Society is, as I have learnt from experience, what its holy founder meant it to be, a well picked militia ever ready to defend the Church and to carry out the wishes of the Holy Father.

Catholic Action and the Sodality

The combination of spiritual motive and concrete, practical work, undertaken by a small, enthusiastic group, as the Sodality idea intends is irresistible

Since much discussion has taken place of late amongst Directors of Sodalities as to the precise position which the Sodality now holds in the Church viewed in its relation to Catholic Action, we believe that it will not be deemed altogether out of place for us also to offer our readers some modest though well considered reflections upon so important and so timely a subject. We shall confine ourselves to what, we think, can be readily admitted by all of Ours: dealing largely with the spirit and scope of the Sodality and Catholic Action. The present article shall be the first of two papers.

1

What is the end of Catholic Action?

Pius XI in his first encyclical, "Ubi arcano" dated December 23, 1922, tells us that Catholic Action aims at restoring the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ. Therefore, if it is true to itself, it must extend, must propagate the reign of Christ. But when can it be said that Christ reigns? The Holy Father in the above mentioned encyclical supplies us with the answer:

> Jesus Christ reigns in the minds of all men by His doctrines, He reigns in their hearts by charity. He reigns in the entire life of men by their observance of His law, and by the imitation of His example. He reigns in the domestic society when it is constituted by the Sacrament of Christian marriage, and is thus made something sacred and inviolable; a society in which the power of the parents expresses the Divine paternity, from which it takes its origin, and derives its name (Eph. 3, 15.); where children emulate the obedience of the Child Jesus and where the whole a atmosphere of living breathes the sanctity of the Family of Nazareth. Finally Christ reigns in the civil society when it attributes to God the highest honors; when from Him it acknowledges the origin of its authority, lest there be wanting a norm of ruling or the dignity of obeying; and when, to conclude, the Church is established in that position of dignity in which it was founded by its Author, as a perfect society, and the leader and teacher of all other societies; that is, of such a nature as not to diminish their power — for they are within their own particular spheres legitimate — but which perfects them, when needful, as grace does nature. . . .

> **Our Slogan**
>
> *Every Sodality*
> *A Leadership School*
> *Every Sodalist*
> *A Leader*

The Pontiff than enumerates a few gatherings meriting more than ordinarily well of the Kingdom of Christ, amongst which he adduces the Sodalities of youth. . . with their singular devotion towards the Blessed Virgin and especially towards the Most Holy Eucharist, joined to exceptional faith, chastity, and fraternal love of one another.

The Holy Father next asserts that faithful Christians are honored by the name of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people, a people of exspectation, and continues:

> Then finally with Us and with Christ closely united, establishing and propagating the reign of Christ by their industry and activity, they will merit that all men acknowledge them as the authors of their common peace.

But a still clearer exposition of Catholic Action has been given, and the mind of the Holy Father has been made more manifest, in a letter to Cardinal Bertram, Bishop of Breslau, written on the 13 of November, 1928. We read:

> It is apparent that Catholic Action has no other purpose than that the laity may participate to some extent in the lay apostolate. Neither does Catholic Action consist wholly in the fact that it would have men strive for their own individual perfection — which, indeed, is primary and the most important — but it is a very real apostleship, common to Catholics of all stations of life. . . In truth, in a way not greatly different from the mission divinely committed to the Church and to its hierarchical apostolate, Catholic Action is to be cousidered, not as something altogether external, but spiritual; not earthly, but heavenly; not "political," but "religious": in fact it may with every right be called "social" since it has as its end the promotion of the reign of Christ Our Lord. . . For we may call that Catholic Action which embraces the whole man, whose correct religious and civil formation it promotes, that is: solid piety, a full knowledge of right doctrine, and a complete integrity of morals, which, if anyone lacks, he cannot exercise in a fruitful way his hierarchical apostolate. For the rest, it is easy to be seen that Catholic Action will in practice be exercised in a different manner according as it is performed by one or other of the sexes.
>
> Neither does Catholic Action in the fulfilment of its commission limit itself to any exclusive way or plan;

on the contrary it purposes to direct and change into social apostolates works and unions whatever be their nature; whether they be chiefly of a religious character, having as an object the training of youth or the fostering of piety, or are in every sense of the word civil or economic.

Hence Catholic Action will by no means withdraw the faithful from public life. On the contrary, it will render them more fit to undertake public offices, since it will strictly hold them to sanctity of life and to the observance of Christian principles.

Therefore we legitimately conclude with His Holiness that:

> From what has been said . . . it is most clear . . . that Catholic Action with complete right may be considered a certain way or plan which the Church uses to convey to all nations every kind of good.

Now for a few logical deductions:

1. Catholic Action is in some general way an active religious organization: this the Sodality of Our Lady unquestionably is.

2. Catholic Action intends as a first requisite that each one concerns himself with the salvation of his individual soul: the Sodality's primary end.

3. Extending itself further Catholic Action exercises an apostolate: a duty likewise essential to the Sodality, so that where an apostolate is wanting there is no real Sodality.

4. Catholic Action imposes the same obligations upon all faithful Christians, but not after the same fashion: In the Sodality youth has one way of exercising its apostolate, another the adults; there is one plan of action for the men, another for the women.

5. Catholic Action demands the coöperation of the laity in the salvation of souls under the leadership of their bishops and priests: how greatly the Sodality depends upon the ecclesiastical hierarchy is common knowledge.

6. Catholic Action calls out all the laity: the Sodality where it is directed in accordance with approved rules and the mind of the legislator is composed of only a select body of men; of men, namely, who wish to surpass others in the service of God. Catholic Action urges all men to battle in the army of Christ: the Sodality aims to form and offer to these soldiers, leaders.

7. Catholic Action does not limit its energies to merely religious undertakings, but likewise extends into the field of social activities: though social works form a very important part of many individual Sodalities of Our Lady, still the Sodality as such does not directly and immediately concern itself with social questions.

Thus we see that the moving spirit and final intent of both Catholic Action and the Sodality are in many aspects identical, and that every representative Sodality is catholic action — a well drawn up battle line contending for the reign of Christ.

In conjunction with what has been said a quotation from a pamphlet recently edited by K. Faustmann, entitled "Katholische Aktion," may prove of challenging interest to our Directors. Here it is succinct, but — pardon the coinage — meaningful:

> In Holland the Sodality of Our Lady which ten years ago was much neglected as being of little profit to the needs of the present times has within a few years proved itself a veritable stronghold of Catholic Action.

And Father Parsons in an article on Catholic Action, "America," February 2, 1929, has this to say of the Sodality:

> More important than all else, however, is the formation of Catholic leaders, with intelligence and self-effacement to do a great work well, for the cause and not for their own advancement. One of the traditianal ways of forming leaders is through the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, as was done, in Vienna before the War, and now in Barcelona, Munich and London, and many other places. The Sodality idea, often misunderstood, is, in its essence, the training of a few, the elite, the leaders. It has always whithered and died when an attempt was made to crowd its ranks. It has also, failed when its action began and ended in the purely spiritual. A few men or women, rightly trained and directed, can transform a city, when imbued with the sense of their responsibility as leaders, and when their work is mapped out for them along intellectual, cultural, social and economic lines; for the combination of spiritual motive and concerete, practical work, undertaken by a small, enthusiastic group, as the Sodality idea intends, is irresistible.

In the next number of Acies Ordinata we will treat of the external relationship existsing between Catholic Action and the Sodality, and of the spirit which animates them both.

Belgium Sodality Statistics

In Belgium from the year 1837 to 1928 more than 3000 Sodalities have been aggregated to the Prima Primaria. About 2400 are under the title of the Immaculate Conception. Towards the end of the year 1927 there were affiliated to our Secretariate of Sodalities 833 Sodalities of the Flemish tongue, embracing in all 97,873 members. The number of Sodalities of the French language was not able to be assertained. Ours direct 87 Sodalities of the French tongue, and 41 of the Flemish.

The Secretary of Sodalities for the Province of Belgium 22 times convoked 585 Directors and an equal number of times 1283 delegates of Young Ladies Sodalities to undertake a common work. (Echos de Belgique, Jan., 1929.)

106 Sodalities communicated to the same Secretary what they had done in behalf of Mexico on the day set aside as one of prayers for that unhappy country. The results were: 10,355 Communions, and 6075 franks, collected and offered to Bishop Diaz S. J. through the Secretary General, Rome.

Modesty in Dress

The Chicago Catholic Student Conference on Religious Activities (Císcora) with a view to coöperating with the Holy Father's frequently expressed wishes, conducted a contest among the 40 Colleges and High Schools for girls in the Chicago area, for a brief, impressive statement on Modesty in Dress. The first prize, a framed photogravure, in colors, of Mueller's Immaculata, was awarded to The Immaculata High School whose students submitted the following set of resolutions:

Our Credo

(We represent about a thousand girls)

Whereas We Believe That:

God decreed woman to be man's helpmate;

God intended woman to be an ennobling and spiritualizing influence, in the lives of men;

The realization of woman's spiritualizing supremacy makes chivalrous men face the worst dangers, death itself, to protect woman;

The indispensible condition for woman to exercise her God-given mission is to conduct herself so that men will elevate their thoughts to the contemplation of those qualities in woman which make her akin to the angels:

The decrease in the respect with which men once regarded woman is largely due to the modern lack of modesty in dress;

There are enough good women to regulate a style of dress that will in every detail come within the requirements of modesty;

Therefore be it Resolved That:

We deplore the decline of woman's ennobling influence;

We deprecate the thoughtlessness of girls and women who become a source of temptation to man by forcing too much of their physical form upon his gaze;

We keep for our model, Mary, the Virgin — Mother of the King of Kings, the sweetest woman;

We place ourselves on record as advocates of a nation-wide campaign for selfrespecting women and girls to keep themselves so modestly — and yet so stylishly — attired that they will inspire the reverence and the respect of all mankind and the approval of "our tainted nature's solitary boast;"

We accept the practical suggestion of the Sodality Convention "that skirts be worn of such length as to cover the knees when standing and sitting."

Spiritual Leadership Schools

On November 24 and 25, 1928, Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S. J. conducted a School of Spiritual Leadership at Canisius College (S. J.), Buffalo, New York. Twenty-six colleges and academies were represented by over 1200 delegates. A noteworthy feature of the meeting was the presence of more than 100 Canadian Sodalists. At the close of the conference a Buffalo Unit of Sodalities was formed, and by unamous consent, the Canisius Sodality was accorded the leadership, with the Prefect of the Canisius Sodality as President of the Unit.

Just preceding that of Buffalo, Father Lord directed a similar School at Cleveland, Ohio. Of the well over 1300 delegates present, more than 100 were from the Brothers of Mary City High School. A distinctive and authoritative tone was given this convention by the presence at the first meeting of His Lordship, Bishop Schrembs, who talked of his intense interest in youth and blessed the meeting and the deliberations that were to follow. At the end of the sessions the students organized, with the Sodality of John Carroll University, Cleveland (S. J.), as their President.

Sodality Brevities

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception more than 5000 of the faithful, 1800, being Children of Mary, received Holy Communion in the church of the Professed House in Bilbao. During the novena in preparation to the Feast, which was held at six in the morning, more than 1000 working girls communicated in a body.

The Primate of Spain publicaly praised the Sodalities for youth at Bilbao. Those of Vitoria merited a like encomium from the Bishop of their city.

On the 8th of December the inhabitants of Foligno, Italy — "Fulginia Civitas Viriginis" — solemnly celebrated the third centenary of the public consecration of their city to the Mother of God.

Towards the end of the year 1928 the Bishop and faithful of Chile and Uruguay commenced the practice of making frequent pilgrimages to the Shrines of Our Lady in Andacollo and Canelones on behalf of their Mexican brethern under persecution.

Prayers for the same intention were poured forth by the Romans before a picture of Guadalupe temporarily located in the Gesù, having been transferred there from its ordinary place in the church of St. Nicholas in Prison. During the ten days that the image remained in our church it was accorded much veneration by the people. On the 16 of December it was solemnly conveyed back to St. Nicholas.

Other solemn pilgrimages were had to the Shrines of Our Lady on the Margaret Islands, Venezuela, and in Estibaliz, Spain. In the latter place the pilgrimage concluded a Congress of Liturgical Music, held under the special patronage of the Queen of the Angelic choirs.

The Sodalist Questions the Hindu

What objections have you against our Religion? Why do you not wish to become a Christian?

Many theories have of late been imagined to explain why there are so few conversions among Hindus. My intention here is not to enter into any controversy on this subject, but to bring some new data which may throw some light on the matter.

The members of our Sodality, who have joined the Voluntary Catechists section, have on many occasions, come in contact with non-Christians; and what is more surprising, in some places, even non-Christian children regularly attend catechism, and are as numerous as the Christian children themselves, if not more.

One day, we were exhorted to try our best to enter into friendly relations with such good Hindus of the ordinary type as we may meet, especially during the holidays. Once we are in friendly terms with those Hindus, we can, little by little, proceed to question them gently on their religious beliefs, and learn from them what obstacles stand in their way and prevent them from embracing Christianity. Young laymen often have a better chance than priests of getting into familiar acquaintance with their Hindu contemporaries and eliciting from them genuine information.

Accordingly about a dozen of us took this interviewing or questioning of Hindus as our vacation hobby, and, the holidays over, we presented our reports to our Director. These reports may be allowed to speak for themselves.

About 54 Hindus of all ages and of all ranks, belonging to the districts of Trichinopoly, Madura, Tanjore and Ramnad, were interviewed and questioned on several topics touching our religion. But the chief question was: "What objections have you against our Religion? Why do you not wish to become a Christian?"

Some four returned no reply at all. The remaining 50 may be divided into two groups: —

The first group comprises those who have no objection at all against our Faith, who admit that the religion we profess is a very good one, if not the only true one, but who fail to have the courage to embrace it, at least now; the second group is made up of those who see no good in the Catholic Religion, or, if there is any good and any truth in it, believe that the same may be said of other religions too. Of the first group we find only 18, and the rest 32 belong to the second group.

To begin by the answers of the second group: 8 of them were under the evil influence of Indifferentism, and said: "All Religions are equally good, and lead to salvation; so why should we change?"

Seven others believed in the false doctrine of Transmigration, and so said that there was no use of changing their religion now, as, after their death, their soul would transmigrate into other bodies and might then be reborn in other religions.

Four men were impressed by the material welfare, of this life, and so said that, by becoming Christians, they would gain nothing, for "are the Christians richer or happier than others?"

Four others said: "You have your God, we have ours; you worship your God, we worship ours; you, Christians, are not better than we Hindus: among you can be found rogues of the first water, and so your religion is not better than ours."

Three said that God had destined them to be Hindus, and had already determined their future actions, and so it was His business to make them Christians, if necessary.

Two said: Christianity is the religion of the outcastes, and low caste people; so we cannot accept to fall into it. Two others said: "We must live and die in the religion of our ancestors, and join them, no matter where they be." Two more people depend on God, who in His extreme goodness will not send them to hell, whatever be the religion they profess.

From people better disposed towards our religion we got other answers:

Six young men were very much preoccupied by the thought of their future career, in case they become Christians: "Our caste people will reject us, we shall be considered as outcastes, and we shall not be able to get married. Even supposing we became Christians, what about our children? How will they get married?"

Five others had not the courage to separate themselves from their parents, who would be extremely afflicted, and would abandon them, if they became Christians.

Two men, rather advanced in age, said that they would die Christians, after receiving baptism at the last moment.

These objections of the practical or theoretical order, cannot be dismissed lightly. Though some other objections may seem ridiculous to the reader, they yet throw light on the somewhat curious opinions the peasants and other backward classes have about Christianity. Of this category two said that, if they became Christians, their Hindu gods would do harm to them, set fire to their house, etc.; one thought that his village poosari would use his magical powers against him to make him die, if he were to give up Hinduism. One individual was under the illusion that the most essential thing to become a Christian was that the would-be con-

vert should be educated, or else he would not be admitted into the fold. The curious objection of another was that, if he became a Christian, his wife would not be allowed to wear her jewels.

Such is the result of the inquiry of our brother-Sodalists. As for myself, I especially inquired among the depressed classes, and I have come to the conclusion from their answers that causes of a moral order not unfrequently are the great impediment to their conversions. But perhaps the most serious obstacle comes from the Catholics themselves. Many of the middle class do not receive the new converts as brethren of 'one fold', but keep aloof from these converts, if they belong to the depressed classes. Were it not for this want of sympathy on the part of well-to-do Catholics, the conversion of the depressed classes would be much easier.

These interviews and these answers cannot fail to awake two feelings in the heart of sincere Christians: first a melancholy feeling of sympathy towards these poor people, most of whom seem to be blind almost beyond hope, or are placed in circumstances which make it extremely difficult for them to embrace the Faith which they admire, and which they would be so happy to profess; secondly a feeling of gratitude towards God for His having gratuitously granted us the gift of Faith! The conclusion that naturally and necessarily flows from this is that we should foster in ourselves a desire and a resolution to enlighten them and help them. Our coming in contact with non-Christians is a constant reminder of the text of the Old Testament: "He (God) hath scattered you among the gentiles that you may declare His wonderful works and make them known that there is no other Almighty God besides Him." (Tob. XIII. 4). It also reminds us of the very solemn and serious warning of Our Lord: "Unto whom soever much is given, of him much shall be required" (Luke. 12. 48).

This reminder of one of your most sacred duties is no the least advantage of such inquiry. But there is also the serious hope of doing real good and saving some souls; for, as I have pointed out, there are good people well disposed towards our religion, who are willing to be baptised before dying. Therefore should we not be constantly on the alert to procure for such good people this pledge of supreme happiness? Moreover in many cases, as remarked by one of us, "the people to whom we speak kindly, are ready to listen to us with attention, and believe whatever we say about our Holy Religion. They chiefly believe us when we show that we have no other motives but to do them good." (A Sodalist.)

In Memoriam

Father Francis J. Finn

"And it gives me great joy to bring before this convention Father Finn, the friend of youth the world over."

Scarcely had the above introductory words of the chairman of the Catholic Students' Leadership Convention held last year in St. Louis died away "when," as we are informed by the Queen's Work, "with a single movement, that was almost a bound, the twelve hundred people were on their feet, and as from the wings Father Finn walked out so smile upon them, young voices cheered frantically, young hands beat wildly together, and hundreds of eyes smiled back into the eyes of the man who was the best known friend of the Catholic youth of America."

"There was something very significant," continues the Queen's Work, "in the fact that the man who knew the heart of youth for fifty years of his Jesuit life should have stood before them in the beginning of the Sodality Movement to tell them how important he felt the work, how eager he was to see it succeed, and how deep was his faith in Catholic young people."

Father Finn died on November 2 of the past year in the Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, U. S. A., fortified with all the consolations of Religion and buoyed up by the assurance that his fruitful life spent on behalf of "Little Ones" would not go unrewarded.

That the public both cleric and lay were deeply appreciative of Father Finn's contribution to his fellow men is evidenced by the fact that the obsequies given the simple Jesuit were made the occasion of a civic demonstration such as the citizens of Cincinnati have rarely witnessed.

A Guard of Honor, composed of the Knights of Columbus watched at the Catafalque during the hours of his lying in state in St. Francis Church, The Archbishop of Cincinnati celebrated the Solemn Pontifical Services at his funeral and pronounced the eulogy of Father Finn's "great unselfish service" and described the "sorrow his loss has brought to the entire clergy of the diocese, the citizens of Cincinnati and the youth of the land." The Bishop of the neighboring diocese of Covington, surrounded by many Monsignori and hunderds of priests crowded the sanctuary, whilst judges, bankers, attorneys and business men mingled with men and women of humblier stations of life in the body of the church. Indeed, long before the beginning of the solemn function within, hundreds thronged the streets before the church to do reverence to the priest who had been father to the children of the parish for thirty long years. An editorial writer of one of the Daily Cincinnati papers did not hesitate to affirm that "Cincinnati has produced individuals of eminence in many of the avenues of human service, but it is doubtful that it has given to the world a more useful man than Father Finn."

Those that lived with Father Finn tell us that the story of Father Finn's life was a simple one, running along the routine of ordinary training and ordinary labor. He did not shine in higher scholarship and though an entertaining speaker was not a pulpit orator. He was pleasant and kind almost to a fault. If men spoke ill of any one he was quick to defend him with the good he knew of him. He

possessed a certain mellow wisdom and a marked faculty for organization which enabled him to win the help of others.

One striking gift he did possess. Father had the wide experience with the young in the class room and on the playground which every Jesuit enjoys, and a keen literary taste. His remarkable knowledge of Boys combined with the mature judgement of the artist enabled him to publish a long series of books for boys in which his concept of the "American Catholic Boy" became a reality and won for him everlasting fame as a writer and imperishable influence with the young.

Yet his Jesuit spirit especially shone in the remarkable and unobtrusive work he did, despite the physical disability of long continued infirmities, to win souls to God. Thirty years ago Father Finn was taken out of the more limited sphere of classroom activities and assigned to the difficult task of replacing a tremendous popular old Indian missionary priest who as assistant pastor of St. Xavier's Church, Cincinnati, had done splendid work in building up the Sodalities of youngmen and women. That the choice was a happy one events quickly proved. Father Finn continued in charge of the Young Women's Sodality right up to his death; and its present membership of one thousand, its fine record of social helpfulness within and without the parish, its genuine Sodality spirit ever enduring tell the tale of its Director's zeal and unflaging encouragement.

However, of all Father Finn's social and educational undertakings none stand out, perhaps, so much as that of his free school at St. Xavier's. Both its universality and usefulness tell us in unmistakable terms that its founder thoroughly grasped the meaning of the Ignatian motto. A. M. D. G., and knew morover, how to apply it with the skill of a master. We will quote the Queen's Work:

"Father Finn came to Cincinnati to find St. Xavier's Church growing into a parish of the nations. About it had settled polyglot groups, the people of a dozen nations, most of them Catholic, and with their boys and girls growing up in a land that the children called their own country though it would always remain a little strange and unfamiliar to the parents.

"For the boys and girls whom he first met as he walked through the streets in his new parish Father Finn planned his free school. Shamelessly he begged for his beloved children. They had a right to an education that was American and that was Catholic, and he meant to see that they got it and got it for the asking.

"The story of that free school is, of course, familiar to every student of American Catholic education. The human side of the story is, however, what appeals to Young hearts. Father Finn walked through the streets to and from his school with the children of every nation clinging to his hands and the sleeves of his coat, carrying his packages, walking backwards solemnly before him, and pushing passers-by off the sidewalk as they formed a cordon around him.

"Italian and Syrean, Pole and Greek, German and French, Irish, of course, and occasional Chinese, these children all recognized in Father Finn their friend, a man who had fought to put Catholic education within their easy reach. His office was jammed with young people. His passage from the rectory down the two blocks to his school was always a sort of miniature triumphal procession. On his slow trips through his parish, scarcely a boy or girl in the streets but stopped in the midst of a game to shout greetings.

"Under his approving eyes these children of the nations produced their famous musical plays, acted fairy dramas that he wrote for them, played ball and studies music, while in his classrooms they were learning the art and science of useful Catholic citizenship.

"His offic boys became solid and worthy citizens of the community. His little secretaries practiced their slow shorthand under his tolerant dictation and went from his office to take fine positions in the business world, until they quitted their offices to become mistresses of their own homes.

"As you walked at his side through the crowded streets of the city men hurrying home from business and women with their babies in their arms stopped him in the course of every block. They were his boys and girls grown to manhood and womanhood, but still dear to the heart of Father Finn, and still cherisning the friendship of the one who had given them their start."

We can no better, I think, close this imperfect summary of Father Finn's active life than by presenting to our readers the little sketch of his thirty years' achievements drawn up by himself at the suggestion of his Rector. Here it is in his own words:

> "Wrote twenty-one juviniles; editor of St. Xavier Calender; took charge of St. Xavier School; made it free and in 25 years have put aside for it an endownment of one hundred thousand dollars. Have done my share to build up a school of juvinile Catholic writers and established a juvinile Catholic library to supply boys and girls the country over with good Catholic books. Established a commercial course at St. Xavier at a nominal fee. Began with two or three and now numbers 476. It is for boys and girls. Effects wonderful. Have done all in my power to promote good books, good entertainments — my motto being rather to point with pride than to view with alarm. Established 'Little Flower Library'."

An enviable record, indeed, of good work well and bravely done, and it gives not a hint of the quiet labor in the confessional, of help extended to the sick and poor and needy, of the zeal that kept aglow the fine spirit of Catholic Faith enkindled by St. Xavier's pioneer priests and pastors. R. I. P.

(Omitting the quotations from the Queen's Work, the above account of Father Finn has — with the exception of a few minor transional phrases — been taken bodily from the December, 1928, Missouri-Chicago Province News-Letter. — The Editor.)

The Mark of the Sodality.

"The special mark of the Sodality is that it is unsurpassed by any other institution in procuring the sanctification of its followers and their apostolic formation, and that in it the exercise of the apostolate flows from the abundance of the interior life. Truly the Sodality may be called another supper-chamber where the Sodalists are joined in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus and are transformed by the Holy Ghost into Apostles. V. R. F. General." — Acies Ordinata, January 1928, p. 1.

Communications

Difficult but not Discouraged

To the Editor:

Our city is situated in a territory belonging formerly to the Russian Empire. A place in which there was for many years a constant attempt to bring about — if such a thing were possible — the utter demoralization of the Church, the Spouse of Christ. Hence, you can easily infer that we are by no means dealing with men — youths or adults — who are able to profoundly appreciate the value of a Christian life, much less of the Sodality of Our Lady. We have, indeed, many Christians "on their knees," but very, very few who, throwing aside every tendency to follow social opportunism, are capable of laboring according to the norms of the Sodality or to direct a gathering. If you add to all this the hostil propaganda directed without intermission against Christ and His Church, together with the protection which, under the present regime, is accorded the Masons, you ought to come pretty close to the weight of opposition which tends to draw down our very best efforts.

Not long ago a number of merchants brought forth as the result of a meeting the demand that I establish for them a Sodality of Our Lady. For me, nothing could have been more desirable.

In the first preparatory session everything went along most prosperously until the question of quenting the Sacraments was broached. At the second gathering not even a half of the former number were present. A very considerable group of the candidates would not give even a thought to their paschal duties.

During the discussion of the constitution of the Sodality, one of the most influential aspirants arose and, after repudiating as old fashioned our most clear methods, strove to introduce modern forms of action. However, seeing that he made no headway with his revolutionary ideas, he appeared no more at the sessions.

In the last meeting, with only two of many present, one, the brother of the above mentioned modernizer, told me under secret that his brother belonged to the lowest degree of the Massonic Order, hence it was that our organization could not please him.

All the difficulties, however, which make Sodality work here so trying do not arise from mere perversity of human nature. The Gentlemen's Sodality of the city numbers 42 members. But, sad to say, they by no means represent a united body apt for external labor. In the first place, this organization was established under most unfavorable circumstances. By chance, and without premeditation, there were, some years back, brought together to form a Sodality a group of men who differed in character, ability and age. Some who should never have been given the name of Sodalists, having once been admitted, cannot now, in reason be dismissed. Others, completely engrossed in their private affairs, resist all our efforts to induce them to undertake some of the works proper to the Sodality. Finally there are those who are good but ignorant. Under these conditions only what is absolutely necessary is insisted upon. For example, every month all assemble in our church to receive Holy Communion in a body. Meanwhile we are studying ways and means of bettering the future. Nor is there wanting well-founded hopes of success.

We have already established a mission section. Our first objective is to organize a series of educative lectures for the purpose of imparting to the more cultured classes a true concept of the mission idea. This preparatory work will be followed by a direct appeal to personal activity or at least to a coöperation by means of alms.

One of the chief obstacles to our labors is, without doubt, the lack of money. At the moment with the assistance of some zealous laymen we are completely engaged in a strenous campaign to gather funds sufficient for the erection of a Sodality Center. One thing is certain: The attacks of our adversaries shall never be able to make us withdraw from our undertaking until we have brought it to a happy conclusion. —

Kalisz, Poland.

P. Jos. M. Konopinski (Prov. Pol. Mai.)

Encouragement

To the Editor:

Congratulations on the Acies. The heading is a vast improvement, and I like the whole get up, the type, titles, etc. . . The table of contents is a good thing.

U. S. A. L. E. O'K.

I think that the Acies makes a very fine appearance.

Italy. T. D.

Yes, I have received the Acies and I am glad to know that its continued reception is assured.

~~England~~. J. I. G.

Thank you very much for the A. O.

Spain. J. A. M.

Just received the two numbers of Acies which I read in spite of the fact that I am in the heart of exam preparation; and this shows no little interest. There is a lot of life and information, for which all I congratulate you.

Italy. J. H. L.

(We heartily thank the above for their interest in Acies. We would be delighted to hear from more of our readers. Writing for a body of silent readers is like casting pebbles into a well without even the added compensation — and how our youthful hearts used to enjoy it — of hearing the faint report of contact from below. — The Editors.)

Contents.

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Canisiusgasse 16, Vienna IX/1, Austria.
Superiorum permissu.
Printed by Julius Lichtner, Strozzigasse 41, Vienna VIII.